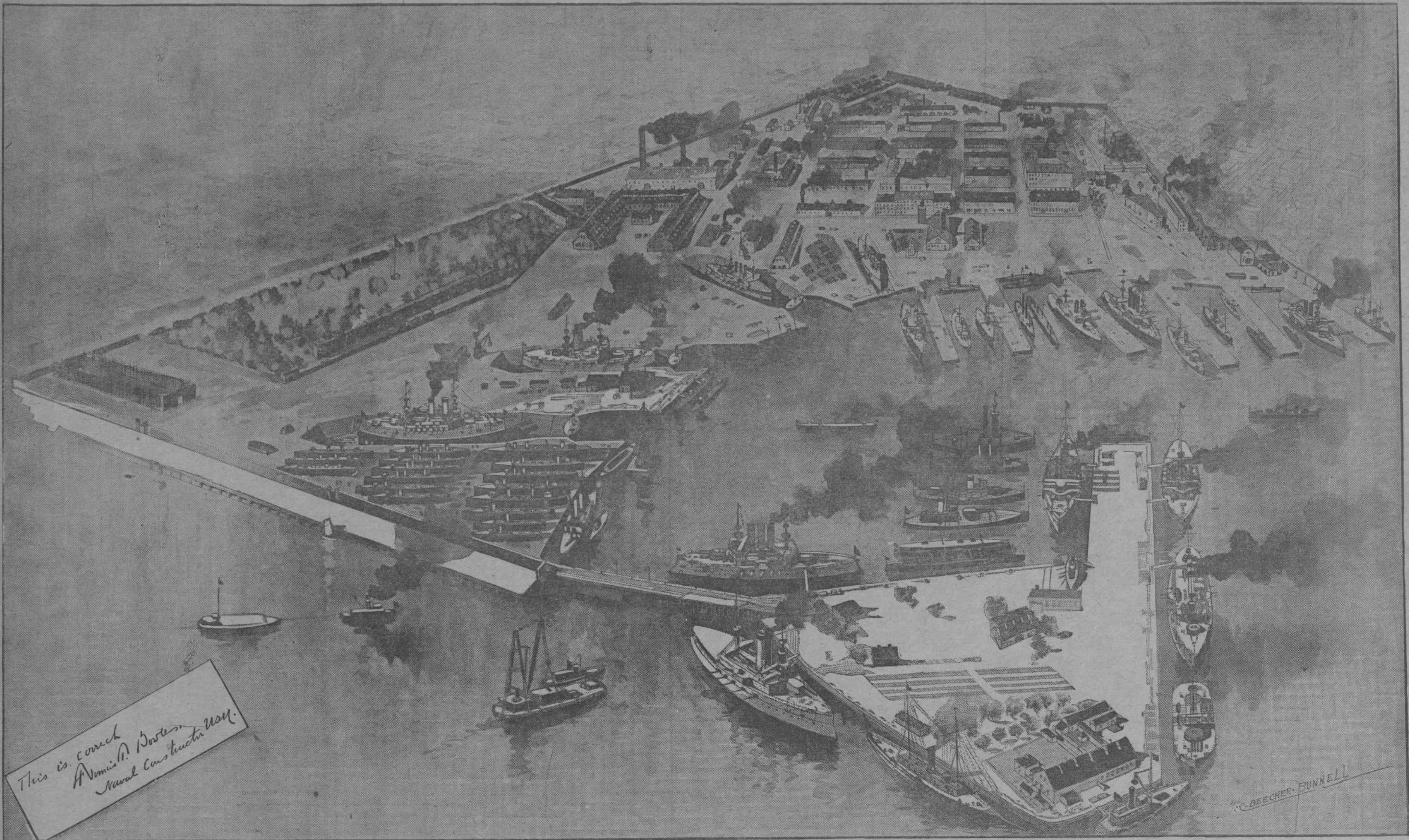


Our New Brooklyn Navy Yard—Unrivalled, When Remodelled, by Any in the World.



How the Brooklyn Navy Yard Will Look When the Improvements Have Been Made Enabling Us to Repair a Battle-Torn Fleet in a Day.

THE Brooklyn Navy Yard is to be made unrivalled among the navy yards of the world. A bill calling for an appropriation of \$2,000,000 will be presented to the present Congress for the beginning of this work. Naval Constructor Francis T. Bowles has worked out a complete plan for this improvement, as shown in the picture above. This will make the United States possess an even more efficient naval repair and construction station than England's famous Portsmouth navy yard, Germany's navy yard at Kiel, or France's at Brest and Toulon.

It became evident during the recent Spanish war how much need there is for a more efficient navy yard at Brooklyn. The cruiser Chicago, on which the work of reconstruction was started before the war began, was not finished until hostilities had ceased.

At present the Brooklyn yard has but one mile of water frontage. By cutting it into slips, as shown in the drawing on this page, the frontage will be increased to five miles. This means that while only three battle ships or large cruisers can now berth for repair, fifteen or seventeen battle ships can then tie up to docks, and there will still be room for fifteen cruisers and a whole flotilla of torpedo boats and destroyers.

The present Cob Dock is to be cut off, making a basin for the accommodation of "ships in ordinary"—that is, for ships laid up.

One of the most important new features will be the torpedo yard, as shown in the left hand part of the picture. Here seventeen torpedo boats at a time can be accommodated after the first improvements are made. These quarters will ultimately be enlarged to take care of fifty torpedo boats.

Another radical change will be the four new dry docks. By the present process when a ship is to be dry-docked there is a mighty flurry in firing up a boiler, setting the engine at work and bailing out the big basin by a bucket plunger.

Instead of this, new rotary pumps, run by electric motors, are to be introduced, with and electricity used instead. By simply pressing a button the immense pumps respond and the heavy steel ship is raised out of water as if by magic.

The whole present system of steam power in the navy yard is to be done away with and electricity used instead. There will be one central power station from which electricity will be distributed to every part of the yard. An electric freight railroad will run to the slips, between the long rows of buildings and along the whole water front.

Portable machine shops, looking somewhat like the wrecking cars of a regular railroad, will be in readiness to be hauled anywhere at a moment's notice, along a ship in dry dock or tied up to a wharf. There will also be floating derricks and machine shops.

Electricity will even be set to work at riveting and other ponderous tasks which men now do by hand.

The big central machine shop will be a marvel of devices in which electricity is brought into service. Modern buildings for pattern works are already under construction and will be fully equipped.

When these and other improvements are made the Brooklyn Navy Yard will be the only one of its kind in the world, holding first rank in efficiency and capacity for handling ships quickly.

It will be as superior to the navy yards of European nations as America's commercial steel works and machine shops excel those of foreign countries.

In one point only will the Portsmouth navy yard of England, now considered the greatest in the world, be superior to Brooklyn's—that is in space for the storage of ships.

But this is more than offset by our facilities for anchoring war ships in the Hudson River. In Haverstraw Bay hundreds of war ships can be held conveniently awaiting sailing orders.

When the Brooklyn Navy Yard is complete it will be a mechanical exposition that will doubtless astonish the naval constructors of the world.

The Brooklyn yard is already the best of the seven naval repair stations in this country. But after it is remodelled it will have a capacity of repairing seventeen battleships, fifteen cruisers and twenty torpedo boats in twenty-four hours instead of requiring a month's work at all the navy yards in this country.

A damaged fleet after a battle then could be put into fighting trim in a day.

SOME OF THE QUEER SUPERSTITIONS THE BOERS HAVE ABOUT THEIR GUNS.

THE Boer—take him as you will—is at best but a half-civilized individual. His character is the queerest mixture of unsophisticated savagery and religious bigotry it is possible to imagine. He will think nothing of flogging a poor Kafir girl almost to death with the brutal sjambok, and yet from this congenial occupation he will reluctantly tear himself away to join with foaming fervor in a prayer meeting on the veldt or the nachtmal, or quarterly reunion, when the members of the church around congregate together.

His piety is of a very low order, inasmuch as it is strictly utilitarian, and he has all sorts of ridiculous beliefs for which authority cannot be found in the Scriptures.

This being the case, it is not surprising that the Boers—who, it is not too much to say, are born almost with a rifle in their hands—should have invested their favorite sport of marksmanship with a number of curious superstitions.

One old burgher, who fought at Majuba, carries about with him a button which came off the tunic of an officer who fell on that bullet-swept hillside. He asserts that the button has consistently given him luck in shooting big game, and he sees no reason why it should not be equally efficacious now that his boy is going out to shoot men. Therefore, before his son left the farmstead to join Commandant Cronje's army, his father hunted out his precious button and sewed it securely on the lad's belt, with many injunctions to him to take care of the sacred relic.

The Boers have a decidedly low opinion of English shooting qualities—no doubt indicated by the last campaign. "The rool-neks can only fire volleys," said one old burgher contemptuously, "and even these are too high. Now, we fire one at a time, and no man fires till he is certain of his aim. We like long ranges best, and a rock force, his father hunted out his precious button and sewed it securely on the lad's belt, with many injunctions to him to take care of the sacred relic.

The Boer marksman, curiously enough, is far better at a moving target than a stationary one, and above all things he detests charges. He cannot successfully stand one, unless posted among all but inaccessible rocks, and he is strongly averse to making one. His stolid, phlegmatic nature is incapable of the enthusiastic outburst which sends British and American soldiers dashing at the enemy with cheers on their lips. Some of the burghers have even got their ministers to bless their arms and ammunition.